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EXAMINER

JOO, JOSHUA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2154

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/083,151

Applicant(s)

TOYOTA ET AL.

Examiner

Joshua Joo

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 May 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12 and 14-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12, and 14-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Amendment filed 5/3/06

1. Claims 1-4, 6-12, and 14-20 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-4, 9-12, and 17-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knight et al, US Patent #6,571, 234 (Knight hereinafter), in view of Leeds, US Publication #2005/012504 (Leeds hereinafter).

4. As per claims 1,9, and 17, Knight teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a knowledge method and system which can be connected to a plurality of clients via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-24. Online community of users.), Knight's teachings comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Col 8, lines 53-55; Col 9, lines 4-5. Subscribers. Col 12, lines 39-42. Authorized members of the community. Col 11, lines 2-6. Board system permits individuals to share certain information, e.g. company information, pricing, motivations.); and

community processing means for managing a virtual community in which a plurality of client terminals can participate (Col 8, lines 22-24. Community of users.), and for categorizing

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and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (Col 8, lines 22-40; Col 10, lines 1-23.

Collection of messages. Categorized. Col 12, lines 1-23; Col 14, line 32-42. Classified

messages.), the messages being posted to the virtual community from the client terminals (Col 8, lines 52-55. Subscriber-user postings.), the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means, said community processing means including (Col 12, lines 40-42. View by authorized members; subscribers to the online provider.):

message subscription type setting means for setting a subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (Col 13, lines 15-25. Identify messages for viewing. Col 15, lines 1-24. Filter, query, and search for messages.).

wherein the subscription type includes browsing via a browser (Col 7, lines 35-37; Col 10, lines 62-67. Browsing via browser.).

5. Knight teaches substantial features of the claimed invention. However, Knight does not teach of a subscription type including at least delivery via mail.

6. Leeds teaches of a plurality of methods for subscribing to messages, wherein messages posted to a forum may be delivered via email (Paragraph 0051).

7. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Knight with the teachings of Leeds because the teachings of Leeds to provide a plurality of methods for subscription to messages including delivery via email would improve the system of Leeds by allowing subscribers to receive and view messages in different forms.

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8. As per claims 2, 10, and 18, Knight teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a knowledge method and system which can be connected to a plurality of clients via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-24. Online community of users.), Knight's teachings comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Col 8, lines 53-55; Col 9, lines 4-5. Subscribers. Col 12, lines 39-42. Authorized members of the community.); and

community processing means for managing a virtual community in which a plurality of client terminals can participate (Col 8, lines 22-24. Community of users.), and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (Col 8, lines 22-40; Col 10, lines 1-23. Collection of messages. Categorized. Col 12, lines 1-23; Col 14, line 32-42. Classified messages.), the message being posted to the virtual community from the client terminals (Col 8, lines 52-55. Subscriber-user postings.), which are granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means, for respective topics (Col 12, lines 40-42. View by authorized members; subscribers to the online provider. Col 11, lines 2-6. Board system permits individuals to share certain information, e.g. company information, pricing, motivations.), said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator (Col 9, lines 30-39; Col 19, line 55 - Col 20, line 18. Service provider identifies subject matter of interest to subscribers.); and

wherein the subscription type includes browsing via a browser (Col 7, lines 35-37; Col 10, lines 62-67. Browsing via browser.).

9. Knight teaches substantial features of the claimed invention. However, Knight does not teach of a subscription type including at least delivery via mail.

10. Leeds teaches of a plurality of methods for subscribing to messages, wherein messages posted to a forum may be delivered via email (Paragraph 0051).

11. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Knight with the teachings of Leeds because the teachings of Leeds to provide a plurality of methods for subscription to messages including delivery via email would improve the system of Leeds by allowing subscribers to receive and view messages in different forms.

12. As per claims 3 and 11, Knight teaches the invention, wherein the administrator is determined for each individual virtual community (Col 8, lines 52-55. Service provider sets forth rules and instructions for the online community.).

13. As per claims 4 and 12, Knight teaches the invention, wherein said message subscription type setting means sets a subscription type of each user for each individual virtual community (Col 13, lines 15-25; Col 15, lines 1-8, 20-24; Col 16, lines 39-51. User chooses which categorized messages the user wants to receive.).

14. Claims 6-8, 14-16, and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Knight, in view of Raghunandan, US Patent #6,816,885 (Raghunandan hereinafter).

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15. As per claims 6, 14, and 19, Knight teaches substantially the invention as claimed including the method and system, which can be connected to a plurality of clients via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-24. Online community of users.), Knight's teachings comprising:

access control means for making a user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Col 8, lines 53-55; Col 9, lines 4-5. Subscribers. Col 12, lines 39-42. Authorized members of the community.); and

community processing means for managing a virtual community in which a plurality of client terminal can participate (Col 8, lines 22-24. Community of users.), and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-40; Col 10, lines 1-23. Collection of messages. Categorized. Col 12, lines 1-23; Col 14, line 32-42. Classified messages.), from the client terminals (Col 8, lines 52-55. Subscriber-user postings.), the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (Col 12, lines 39-42. Reply only seen by other authorized members (i.e. subscribers) of the community. Col 11, lines 2-6. Board system permits individuals to share certain information, e.g. company information, pricing, motivations.), said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for determining, when a reply message use to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to a message (Col 12, lines 1-4, 40-42. Posting replies.) used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber, automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong by analyzing the message of the reply message, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message (Col 12, lines 1-28. Posting logic classifies message by identify subject matter.).

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16. Knight teaches substantial features of the claimed invention including analyzing a message's content and context for classification of the reply message. However, Knight does not teach that the reply message is a mail message and analyzing a message header for classification.

17. Raghunandan teaches a system for receiving and classifying emails, wherein the predetermined classification system of emails involves the concept of analyzing the header (Col 4, lines 28-38)

18. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Knight with the teachings of Raghunandan because both references teach of classifying received messages by examining the content and context. Furthermore the teachings of Raghunandan to send email messages and classify the email messages by analyzing the header would improve the system of Knight by allowing subscribers alternative methods for posting messages, and allowing the storage of messages based on email classification as taught by Raghunandan.

19. As per claims 7, 15, and 20, Knight teaches substantially the invention as claimed including the method and system, which can be connected to a plurality of clients via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from each client terminal to a virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-24. Online community of users.), Knight's teachings comprising:

access control means for making a user authentication of a client terminal as an access request source so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Col 8, lines 53-55; Col 9, lines 4-5. Subscribers. Col 12, lines 39-42. Authorized members of the community.); and

community processing means for managing a virtual community in which a plurality of client terminal can participate (Col 8, lines 22-24. Community of users.), and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the virtual community (Col 8, lines 22-40; Col 10, lines 1-23. Collection of messages. Categorized. Col 12, lines 1-23; Col 14, line 32-42. Classified messages.), from the client terminals (Col 8, lines 52-55. Subscriber-user postings.), the client terminals being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (Col 12, lines 39-42. Reply only seen by other authorized members (i.e. subscribers) of the community. Col 11, lines 2-6. Board system permits individuals to share certain information, e.g. company information, pricing, motivations.), for respective topics, said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for automatically determining, when a reply message use to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to a message (Col 12, lines 1-4, 40-42. Posting replies.) used to deliver the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber, automatically determining a virtual community to which the reply message should belong by analyzing a subject of the reply message, and categorizing and accumulating the reply message (Col 12, lines 1-28. Posting logic classifies message by identifying the content and text.).

20. Knight teaches substantial features of the claimed invention including analyzing a message's content and context for classification of the reply message. However, Knight does not teach that the reply message is a mail message.

21. Raghunandan teaches a system for receiving and classifying emails, wherein the predetermined classification system of emails involves the concept of analyzing the content for categorization (Col 4, lines 28-44)

22. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Knight with the teachings of Raghunandan because both references teach of classifying received messages by examining the content and context. Furthermore the teachings of Raghunandan to send email messages and classify the email messages by analyzing the body would improve the system of Knight by allowing subscribers alternative methods for posting messages and allowing the storage of messages based on email classification as taught by Raghunandan.

23. As per claim 8, Knight teaches the system according to claim 6, wherein said reply message processing means further automatically determines a topic to which the reply message should belong (Col 12, lines 14-123. Determines one or more categories; classifies based on area/class/subclass.).

24. As per claim 16, Knight teaches a method according to claim 14, wherein the reply message processing means includes the step of further automatically determining a topic to which the reply message should belong (Col 12, lines 2-15. Posting logic determines which categories the reply messages should belong.).

Response to Arguments

25. Applicant's arguments filed 5/3/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argued that:

26. (1) Knight does not teach or suggest a "message subscription type setting means" that "[set] a subscription type... in accordance with an instruction from the user"

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In response, Davis teaches that,

- i) Col 9, lines 60-65, "the information is broken down and sorted into a number of subject matter areas, which subject matter areas represented logical collections of content **according to a (potentially different) set of service provider (or user) specific rules, filters, criteria, etc.**
- ii) Col 13, lines 14-16, "allow **the user to identify an initial board area of search** for a group of logically related message."
- ii) Col 15, lines 1-7, "Another subject matter area control 312 corresponds generally to "Trading lessons" learned by subscribers from a particular/transaction. The menu for this subject matter area can include collections of information that allow **community members to quickly isolate** and understand collective learnings... For example, **the user can filter messages** based on a category correspond to messages..."
- iv) Col 15, lines 19-23, "more refined **searching operation, or query can be effectuated by the user** by selecting any (or more) of the query parameters 317, so that message falling under such classification can be retrieved."
- v) Col 11, lines 54-60, "a group of the same matching the **user's query criteria** are easily and rapidly located. These **entries are then transmitted to the user's** computer system..."

From quoted sections (i) to (v), Davis teaches multiple examples of setting a subscription type according to instructions from a user.

27. (2) Knight nor Leeds teaches or suggests "the subscription type [including] at least delivery via mail and browsing via a browser. Leeds does not teach or suggest at least two subscription types.

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In response, Knight teaches the subscriber utilizing a browser (Col 7, lines 50-53; Col 10, line 63 – Col 11, line 4). Knight does not teach of the subscription type at least delivery via mail. Leeds teaches of opening a dialog box to display messages or alternatively delivering messages of which the user has subscribed via email (Paragraph 0051). Thus, both methods of subscription, by delivery via mail and browsing via a browser, were known at the time of Applicant's filing of the application.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Knight with the teachings of Leeds to provide subscription by delivery via email in addition to Knight's subscribing via a browser because doing so would allow subscribers to receive and view messages in different forms and provide more than one method of receiving and viewing subscription messages.

In addition, Davis teaches that the "agent 360 is initiating display of chat forums in addition to those being displayed or diverting messages... sent through the active chat forum or the entry of clients with known preferences or **user settings**." (Paragraph 0037) Therefore, the agent may operate by setting the method of subscription, opening display messages in a dialog box or delivering via email (as discussed above), in accordance with user instructions, i.e. user settings.

28. (3) Knight does not teach or suggest an "access control means" that [grants] access permission for specified topics"

Davis teaches, "when posting replies, the user is given the **option** of sending the reply **only** where it can be seen by other **authorized members** of the community (i.e. **subscribers** to the online service provider)" (Col 12, lines 39-42).

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Davis further teaches, "message/bulletin board system 200 to **permit individual** and community based online **sharing of such information** as : (1) motivations, opinions, reasonings, etc. for trading financial instruments; (2) company and/or commodity information; (3) equity and/or commodity pricing, pricing patterns..."

Davis teaches that user may have option of deciding that only authorized members (i.e. subscribers) may view the replies, so users must be granted authorization to view the posted replies. Davis further teaches that individuals are permitted, e.g. given consent or allowed, to share certain information. Therefore, Knight teaches of granting access permission for specified topics.

Conclusion

29. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

30. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

31. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua Joo whose telephone number is 571 272-3966. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 7 to 4.

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32. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John A. Follansbee can be reached on 571 272-3964. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned 571-273-8300.

33. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

June 21, 2006
JJ

 JOHN FOLLANSBEE
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